

Message Text

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INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY MADRID
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USMISSION USNATO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 14141

MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: SOCIALIST RECONSTRUCTION BEGINS

SUMMARY. THE FORCES OF MICHEL ROCARD AND THOSE OF THE
LEFT-WING CERES SQUARED OFF ONCE AGAIN APRIL 29 AS THE
SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) BEGAN THE TASK OF REVISING ITS

..
POLITICAL STRATEGY IN THE WAKE OF LEFT DEFEAT LAST
MARCH. WHILE THE NATIONAL CONVENTION PRODUCED NO ARGU-
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MENT OVER THE CENTRAL ISSUE OF RETAINING THE UNION OF
THE LEFT AS THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF PS ACTION, THERE
WERE MAJOR DIFFERENCES OF OPINION OVER THE NATURE OF
THAT ALLIANCE, E.G., DOES ONE BUILD AN INDEPENDENT SO-
CIALIST PARTY FIRST, STRONG ENOUGH TO THEN DOMINATE NE-
GOTIATIONS WITH THE PCF, OR IS CLOSER POLITICAL AND
PROGRAMMATIC COOPERATION REQUIRED FROM THE VERY BEGIN-

NING OF THE RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS? MITTERRAND HIMSELF WILL HEAD THE COMMISSION CHARGED WITH ELABORATING A WORKING DOCUMENT BY JULY 8, WHICH WILL THEN BE DEBATED UNTIL A NATIONAL CONVENTION IS HELD IN FEBRUARY 1979. THE PS ALSO AGREED TO RESPOND FAVORABLY TO GISCARD'S INVITATION TO DISCUSS THE FRENCH DISARMAMENT PROPOSAL -- GASTON DEFFERRE WILL HEAD A PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION IN A MAY 11 VISIT TO THE ELYSEE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS: SOCIALIST LEADERS HAVE BEEN SAYING FOR WEEKS THAT THE PARTY HAS TWO MAJOR TASKS FOR THE POST-ELECTORAL PERIOD:

- TO STRENGTHEN INTERNAL PARTY DEMOCRACY (A THEME DEAR TO THE HEART OF PS NUMBER TWO PIERRE MAUROY), NOTABLY REGARDING THE SELECTION OF CANDIDATES FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE;
- TO DEVELOP A "SOCIALIST PROJECT" WHICH, WHILE REMAINING WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A UNION OF THE LEFT STRATEGY, WOULD SET FORTH A MORE UNIQUELY PS PLAN FOR FRENCH SOCIETY IN LIEU OF THE NOW DEFUNCT COMMON PROGRAM.

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF APRIL 29 REMAINED FAITHFUL TO SUCH PREDICTIONS, AS DEBATE CENTERED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON THESE TWO ISSUES, PUNCTUATED BY LIONEL JOSPIN'S REPORT ON THE COMMUNISTS' "STRATEGY OF FAILURE" - CONFIDENTIAL

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THE PCF WITHDRAWAL FROM THE LEFT ALLIANCE WHEN THE BALANCE OF FORCE WENT AGAINST IT, THE PS FINALLY BECOMING THE MAIN ADVERSARY.

2. MITTERRAND ON THE DEFENSIVE: THE QUESTION OF INTERNAL DEMOCRACY BROUGHT WITH IT SUBSTANTIAL CRITICISM OF THE PARTY'S "PRESIDENTIAL" CHARACTER, AN ACCUSATION WHICH MITTERRAND MET HEAD-ON IN A LENGTHY JUSTIFICATION OF THE PS LEADERSHIP, CALLING THE PS "THE MOST DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN FRANCE" AND REJECTING CATEGORICALLY THE CHARGES OF "IMPERIALISM AND PRESIDENTIALISM." MICHEL ROCARD FOUND HIMSELF AT LEAST INDIRECTLY THE PRIMARY TARGET FOR MITTERRAND'S MOST SEVERE LANGUAGE AS MANY OF THE HARSHTEST CRITICISMS OF PARTY LEADERSHIP WERE TO BE FOUND IN THE INTERVENTIONS OF ROCARD'S SUPPORTERS. MITTERRAND WAS ALSO REPLYING TO PIERRE MAUROY, WHO HAD ALREADY MAINTAINED SEVERAL TIMES PUBLICLY THAT THE PS HAD NOW ENTERED A NEW PHASE IN ITS HISTORY WHERE MORE EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED ON BRINGING PARTY MEMBERSHIP INTO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS; THE MORE AUTHORITARIAN LEADERSHIP STYLE OF THE CONSOLIDATION PERIOD SHOULD NOW BE ALTERED.

3. IN SEIZING ON THIS ISSUE, MAUROY CAST HIMSELF IN THE ROLE OF CHAMPION OF THE LITTLE MAN WHERE HE CAN APPEAL TO PARTY MEMBERS OF ALL PERSUASIONS, THUS TRYING TO STRENGTHEN HIS POSITION AS THE LEADER (AFTER MITTER-

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RAND) MOST CAPABLE OF UNIFYING THE PARTY. THERE WILL BE, HOWEVER, NO IMMEDIATE ACTION ON MAUROY'S REFORM PROPOSALS, AS THE PARTY DECIDED TO CONVENE ANOTHER CONVENTION IN OCTOBER TO TREAT THIS PROBLEM IN DETAIL (INCLUDING THE COMPOSITION OF PARTY LEADERSHIP WHICH WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED UNTIL THAT TIME). WHILE THE DEBATE ON INTERNAL DEMOCRACY WILL CONTINUE, THE CONVENTION, INCLUDING THE CERES, VOTED OVERWHELMINGLY (6368 TO 198) TO APPROVE THE LEADERSHIP'S ACTIONS SINCE THE CONGRESS OF NANTES (JUNE

1977).

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4. THE ROCARD LINE: WHILE MAUROY CONTINUES TO PLAY HIS STRONGEST SUIT IN THE REALM OF PARTY ORGANIZATION, HIS COMPETITOR FOR THE EVENTUAL SUCCESSION TO MITTERRAND'S POSITION -- MICHEL ROCARD -- HAS CHOSEN THE ELABORATION OF PS POLITICAL STRATEGY AS HIS FIELD OF COMBAT. IN THE MOST SERIOUS SPEECH DURING THE CONVENTION, ROCARD OUTLINED A PROGRAM FOR THE PARTY WHICH RETAINED PRIMARY EMPHASIS ON THE UNION OF THE LEFT AND THE "RUPTURE WITH CAPITALISM", BUT IN SUCH A CONTEXT AS TO BE IMMEDIATELY BRANDED "REFORMIST" BY THE CERES. ACCORDING TO ROCARD:

- THE UNION OF THE LEFT IS NO LONGER THE STRATEGY OF THE PCF; ONLY A STRONG PS, OPERATING INDEPENDENTLY, CAN BRING SOCIALISM TO FRANCE. ONLY WHEN THE PS HAS ACHIEVED THAT STRENGTH CAN "THE NECESSARY NEGOTIATIONS, COMPROMISES AND COMMON PROGRAMS" WITH THE PCF BEGIN;
- THE "BREAK WITH CAPITALISM" CAN ONLY BE A LONG-TERM PROCESS AND NOT A DREAM OF THE FIRST THREE MONTHS IN POWER: "TO PRETEND TO ATTACK RIGHT AWAY ON ALL FRONTS IS TO DECLARE WAR WITHOUT AN ARMY AND WITHOUT A STRATEGY."
- THE LEFT CAN IMPLEMENT ITS PROGRAM SUCCESSFULLY ONLY IF IT ENJOYS A REAL MAJORITY, WHICH MEANS THE ELABORATION OF A PS PROJECT WHICH CAN OBTAIN "ENLARGED POPULAR SUPPORT."

5. CERES OPPOSITION: ROCARD'S PROPOSITIONS ELICITED AS EXPECTED THE HOSTILITY OF THE CERES FOR WHOM "ENLARGED POPULAR SUPPORT" CAN ONLY BE SHORTHAND FOR AN ALLIANCE WITH THE CENTER AND FOR WHOM THE "RUPTURE WITH CAPITALISM" MUST BE ABRUPT AND DECISIVE WITHIN THE FIRST MONTHS IN ORDER TO ESCAPE "THE LOGIC OF CAPITALISM." CONTRARY TO ROCARD, THE CERES FAVORS BUILDING THE ALLI-
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ANCE WITH THE PCF FROM TODAY, MAKING THE UNION OF THE LEFT AN EVERYDAY AFFAIR AT ALL LEVELS OF THE PARTY AND NOT JUST AN OPERATION FOR THE LEFT LEADERSHIP. IN COMBATING ROCARD, THE CERES BECOMES A TACIT ALLY OF PIERRE MAUROY, WHO MAY NOT BE THE INCARNATION OF CERES DREAMS, BUT IS MUCH LESS A THREAT IN HIS ROLE AS PARTY UNIFIER THAN ROCARD WOULD BE AS INNOVATOR OF A NEW SOCIALIST

STRATEGY.

6. COMMENT: ALL FACTIONS, INCLUDING THE CERES AND ROCARD, AGREE ON ONE FUNDAMENTAL POINT -- THE IMMEDIATE NECESSITY TO REAFFIRM THE SEPARATE IDENTITY OF THE PS AND ITS CONCEPT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIALISM IN FRANCE. ALL AGREE AS WELL THAT THE COMMUNISTS ARE A VITAL ELEMENT IN ANY PS POLITICAL STRATEGY, HENCE THE CONTINUED EMPHASIS ON THE UNION OF THE LEFT. AS ANY NUMBER OF SOCIALIST LEADERS HAVE EXPLAINED TO US IN RECENT WEEKS, THE LEFT STRATEGY IS THE ONLY ONE POSSIBLE. THE PS HAS STAKED OUT AN IMPORTANT ELECTORAL TERRAIN ON THE LEFT, ROOTED IN THE APPEAL OF SOCIALISM AS A PROMISE FOR A DRASTIC REORDERING OF THE STRUCTURE AND PRIORITIES OF THE CAPITALIST STATE -- THE "BREAK", BE IT SLOW OR IMMEDIATE. BASED ON THAT APPEAL, THE PS (WITH THE MRG) HAS MOVED TO NEARLY ONE-QUARTER OF THE ELECTORATE. THE LURE OF MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIOS IS SIMPLY NOT SUFFICIENT ARGUMENT TO RISK SQUANDERING THIS ELECTORAL BASE (PARTICULARLY IN THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE DECLINE OF THE SFIO) WHICH MUST BE JEALOUSLY GUARDED ON BOTH THE LEFT AND RIGHT FLANKS AND EXPANDED WHERE POSSIBLE.

7. WITHIN THOSE GROUND RULES, THE LEFT STRATEGY IS HOPEFULLY ACCEPTED AS THE ONLY ONE POSSIBLE, EVEN BY MICHEL ROCARD. THE CRITICAL QUESTIONS BECOME:

-- HOW DOES THE PS INCREASE ITS SHARE OF THE ELECTORATE, GIVEN COMPETITION ON ITS RIGHT

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AND LEFT?;

-- HOW DOES THE PS ASSIST IN CREATING A COOPERATIVE, RELIABLE PARTNER ON ITS LEFT (THE PCF)?

THESE ARE THE ISSUES WHICH WILL BE AT THE HEART OF THE

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PS DEBATE. DOES ONE BUILD UNION THROUGH THE PROCESS
OF A CLOSE DAY-TO-DAY, WORKING RELATIONSHIP OR IS PCF
COOPERATION POSSIBLE ONLY WHEN THE PS IS STRONG ENOUGH
TO IMPOSE ITS WILL? CAN THE "DECISIVE BREAK" PREACHED
BY THE COMMON PROGRAM EVER INSTILL THE NECESSARY CONFI-
DENCE IN AN ELECTORATE WHICH IS CONSERVATIVE AT HEART
AND DISLIKES INSECURITY?

8. MITTERRAND HIMSELF WILL HEAD THE COMMISSION WHICH
WILL DRAFT A WORKING DOCUMENT FOR PARTY DEBATE ON THESE
QUESTIONS BEGINNING JULY 8. IN THAT CAPACITY, HE WILL
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NO DOUBT REASSERT THE AUTHORITY WHICH WAS UNCHARACTERIS-
TICALLY ABSENT AT THIS CONVENTION WHERE MAJOR INITIATI-
VES CAME FROM OTHER LEADERS. HE IS STILL UNQUESTIONABLY
MASTER OF THE SOCIALIST HOUSE -- BOTH MAUROY AND ROCARD
ONCE AGAIN NOTED THAT MITTERRAND SEEMED THE ONLY LOGICAL
CHOICE FOR 1981 -- BUT SAVVY ENOUGH TO SENSE THE WINDS
OF PARTY EVOLUTION AND TO ASSOCIATE HIMSELF WITH RATHER
THAN AGAINST THEM. MAUROY AND ROCARD ARE PLAYING FOR
THE LONG-TERM, THE FORMER IN CONSOLIDATING HIS GRIP ON
THE PARTY'S ORGANIZATIONAL BASE AND THE LATTER IN
FIGHTING THE BATTLE FOR A POLITICAL STRATEGY FOR WHICH
HE COULD THEN LOGICALLY BECOME THE PS' CHIEF EXECUTOR.

THE SUCCESSION PROCESS WILL BE LONG, ALMOST SURELY
STRETCHING BEYOND 1981, BUT IT HAS BEEN IMPLICITLY
ENGAGED AND WILL BE A FACTOR IN NEARLY EVERY PS DECISION
IN THE MONTHS TO COME.
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